

**Education Committee & Human Services Committee
Informational Forum on Accessing Early Childhood Funding Streams**

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The Department of Education welcomes the opportunity to update members of the Education and Human Services Committee regarding efforts taken by the Department and the Department of Social Services to access funds for early childhood education through a variety of funding streams including the Early Learning Challenge Grants, Head Start, and Race to the Top.

The Early Learning Challenge Grants is a competitive grant opportunity included as a part of the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act that passed the House of Representatives last September and is currently awaiting action in the Senate. It is expected that this grant opportunity will be administered jointly by the U.S. Department of Education and the Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The grant is expected to award two different types of grants:

- *Quality Pathways Grants* would be available to states that already have made significant progress toward establishing systems for improving the quality of early learning settings. These grants would be awarded for five years and would be renewable.
- *Development Grants* would be available to states with some elements of an early learning system in place and would be used to support planning efforts. These grants would be awarded for three years and would not be renewable, with the expectation that after three years, developing states would have made enough progress to apply for Quality Pathways Grants.

Final guidance has not yet been issued for this grant since the bill is still awaiting action in the Senate. However, Department staff has already begun preparations to apply for these funds once that information becomes available.

The Department is working with the Department of Social Services to apply for ARRA Head Start Funds for State Advisory Councils Early Childhood Education and Care. The education implementer bill passed last September by the General Assembly reconstituted the state's Early Childhood Cabinet to align its membership and objectives with federal guidance for the Head Start State Advisory Council. The members of this Advisory Council have been named and the group has begun preparations to apply for this funding opportunity. This is a formula grant and applications are due on August 1, 2010. Connecticut is eligible to receive \$582,974 for the 3 year grant period however the state is required to meet a non-Federal share of 70 percent of the total approved cost of the project (\$1,360,273). The non-Federal share may be met by cash or in-kind

contributions and the State Advisory Council has already begun identifying resources that could be used for this match.

The Race to the Top grant competition does not have funds specifically allocated for early childhood education. "Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes" is an invitational priority in Race to the Top, which means that applicants were allowed to include a one page summary of the state's efforts to improve early childhood education outcomes for high-need students however, no points were awarded for these efforts.

In summary, the Department is prepared to maximize any and all opportunities for federal funding for early childhood, working cooperatively with the State's Head Start Advisory Council and the Department of Social Services, where appropriate.